

REMARKS

Applicant submitted claims 1-28 for examination. In the Office Action of January 25, 2002, the Examiner rejected each of these claims. Claims 1-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as indefinite. The Examiner also rejected claims 1-7, 10-14, and 18-28 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,676,003 to *Ursel* et al. The Examiner then rejected claims 8, 9 and 15-17 based on their dependence on rejected base claims but indicated these claims to be allowable if rewritten.

With respect to the §112 rejection, Applicant has amended its claims to cure any asserted deficiency. Specifically, Applicant has amended claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 13, and 14 in line with the suggestions made by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant believes these claims are no longer indefinite.

As to claims 8, 9 and 15-17, at the suggestion of the Examiner, Applicant has rewritten claims 8,9 and 15 in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim. These claims are now in condition for allowance. Moreover, claims 16 and 17 depend upon the now rewritten claim 15 and are also consequently allowable.

Likewise, claims 1-7, 10-14, 18-21, 26 and 27 are also in condition for allowance following amendments made by Applicant to independent claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation that "wherein the at least one lock link is mounted such that movement of the pawl is necessarily accompanied by movement of the link". This limitation is not taught by *Ursel* either alone or in combination with any cited reference. Indeed, movement of pawl (23) of *Ursel* does not necessarily cause lock link (32) or (33) to move. This inventive aspect results in a compact latching mechanism with fewer parts. It is, in fact, apparent from the drawings alone that the mechanism of the present invention has far fewer moving parts and is significantly more compact than the invention of *Ursel*. Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependents, 2-7, 10-14, 18-21, and 26-27 are allowable.

As concerns claims 22-24, independent claim 22 has been amended to include the limitation "wherein a cam having a single plane profile is driven by the actuator to select the states". *Ursel*, either alone or in combination, fails to teach this inventive feature.

Cam (44) of *Ursel* comprises a multiple plane profile as seen in Figures 5 and 6. In contrast, cam (30) of the invention requires only a single plane profile to select the differing locking states, resulting in a simpler locking mechanism with fewer parts. This added limitation to claim 22 is novel, rendering claims 22-24 allowable over the cited references.

In addition to the reasons stated above, claims 26-27, are allowable over *Ursel* because it fails to disclose the feature of multiple latch mechanisms with “each mechanism being operable by respective first and second power actuators to give respective first and second sets of operating modes, each mode having alternate states, and control of the power actuators being different to provide for different first and second set of operating modes.” Indeed, while *Ursel* may arguably disclose the use of more than one latch mechanism, it does not disclose or provide an enabling disclosure for differing control of the power actuators to effect differing operating modes. That is, previously, it was necessary to fit physically different latches to front and rear doors of vehicles to provide a child safety mode on the rear door but no child safety door mode on the front doors. A novel aspect of this invention permits a physically identical latch to be used, for example, on both the front driver’s door and rear passenger door of a vehicle so that the rear passenger door may be controlled to have a child safety function whereas the front door would not. By being able to fit identical latches to both the front and rear doors, the number of different latches that must be designed, manufactured and supplied to vehicle manufacturers may be significantly reduced, leading to significant savings throughout the supply chain. Moreover, the inventory carried by vehicle dealers for carrying out after-market repairs to latches can be significantly reduced. Neither *Ursel* nor any other reference envisions this situation. Accordingly, claims 26-27 are allowable.

For the reason stated above, claim 28 is allowable over *Ursel* and the cited references because this claim has the limitation of “first and second latch mechanisms being substantially the same, and being operable by respective first and second power actuators to give respective first and second sets of operating modes each mode having alternate states, control of the power actuators being different to provide for different first and second sets of operating modes.” Differing control to provide for different first and

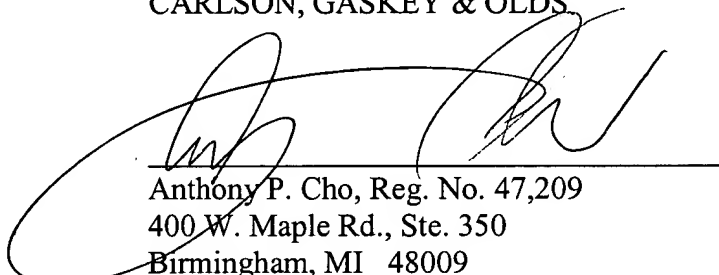
second sets of operating modes for substantially the same latch mechanisms is simply not disclosed in the cited references. Thus, claim 28 is in condition for allowance.

In addition to claims 1-28, Applicant requests examination of new claims 29-46. These claims highlight distinctions between the cited references and the present invention. Applicant contends these new claims are also allowable.

Applicant encloses a check in the amount of \$576.00 for three new independent claims and 18 new dependent claims. If additional fees are necessary, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS

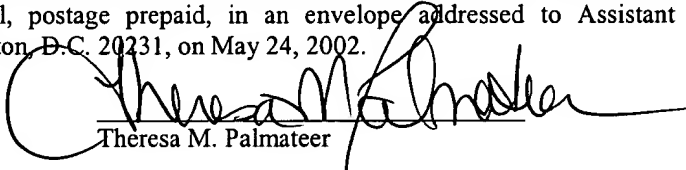


Anthony P. Cho, Reg. No. 47,209
400 W. Maple Rd., Ste. 350
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 988-8360

Dated: May 24, 2002

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the attached Amendment and Fee are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on May 24, 2002.



Theresa M. Palmateer

APPENDIX A

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Amended) A latch mechanism including a housing, a pawl movably mounted in the housing to release [the] a latch, [with] at least one of an inside and outside lock link mounted [for movement with the pawl with the at least one lock link being] so as to be movable between a first position at which operation of an associated release [means] member causes movement of the pawl to release the latch, and a second position at which operation of the associated release [means] member does not cause movement of the pawl wherein the at least one lock link is mounted such that movement of the pawl is necessarily accompanied by movement of the link.
3. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 1 in which a pawl lifter is connected to [a] the pawl and the at least one lock link is mounted on the pawl lifter.
4. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 1 in which the at least one lock link is pivotally mounted for rotational movement between [its] the first and second positions.
6. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 1 in which indexing of a cam effects movement of the at least one lock link between [its] the first and second positions.
8. (Amended) A latch mechanism [as defined in claim 7] including a housing, a pawl movably mounted in a housing to release the latch, with at least one of an inside and outside lock link mounted for movement with the pawl with the at least one lock link being movable between a first position at which operation of an associated release member causes movement of the pawl to release the latch, and a second position at which operation of the associated release member does not cause movement of the pawl in which indexing of a cam effects movement of the at least one lock link between the first

and second positions, in which the cam is rotationally mounted for indexing and in which the cam is rotationally mounted co-axially with the pawl

9. (Amended) A latch mechanism [as defined in claim 6] including a housing, a pawl movably mounted in a housing to release the latch, with at least one of an inside and outside lock link mounted for movement with the pawl with the at least one lock link being movable between a first position at which operation of an associated release member causes movement of the pawl to release the latch, and a second position at which operation of the associated release member does not cause movement of the pawl in which indexing of a cam effects movement of the at least one lock link between the first and second positions, and in which the cam includes at least 2 cam lobes which position the at least one lock link in one of the first and second positions, with the at least 2 cam lobes being separated by a cam valley which positions the at least one lock link in the other of the first and second positions.

12. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 6 in which the release [means] member is capable of indexing the cam to move at least one of the lock links between the first and second positions.

13. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 12 in which the release [means] member is capable of indexing the cam to move at least one of the lock links from [its] the second position to [its] the first position.

14. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 1 in which movement of the at least one lock link between [its] the first and second position is effected by a power actuator.

15. (Amended) A latch mechanism [as defined in claim 1] including a housing, a pawl movably mounted in a housing to release the latch, with at least one of an inside and outside lock link mounted for movement with the pawl with the at least one lock link being movable between a first position at which operation of an associated release

member causes movement of the pawl to release the latch, and a second position at which operation of the associated release member does not cause movement of the pawl in which the pawl is capable of being moved to release the latch by a power actuator.

16. (Amended) A latch mechanism as defined in claim 15 in which the power actuator which indexes [the] a cam is the same power actuator which moves the pawl wherein indexing of the cam effects movement of the at least one lock link between the first and second positions.

22. (Amended) A latch mechanism having a set of operating modes, each mode having alternate states, the set including at least one of a lock mode and a super lock mode, and at least one of a child safety mode and a release mode, changing of the latch mechanism between alternate states of each of the at least two modes of the set being effected by a single power actuator wherein a cam having a single plane profile is driven by the actuator to select the states.